



Interracial News Service

A DIGEST OF TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RELATIONS

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NUMBER 1

RACE RELATIONS — DENOMINATIONAL STATEMENTS

PART I

On several occasions the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations has published compilations of statements by denominations regarding various aspects of race relations. These compilations, which are now out of print, have carried statements up to and including the year 1954.

As a result of many requests for a compilation of statements issued by the denominations since 1954, the editors of INTERRACIAL NEWS SERVICE are devoting this issue and the next one to such a collection. Because of space limitations, it has been necessary to excerpt carefully the pertinent sections of the statements for inclusion in this collection. If full copies of any one of these statement, or statements prior to 1955, are needed, it is suggested that the denominations be contacted directly.

Addresses of the denominations may be obtained from *The Yearbook of The American Churches*, 1959, or from the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

May 24, 1955

Public Schools and Non-segregation

. . . THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the American Unitarian Association at its 130th Annual Meeting urge our churches and fellowships to cooperate in their communities with all efforts to facilitate the transition to non-segregation, and we assert our opposition to all efforts, including the weakening of the public schools, to evade the Supreme Court decision.

May 22, 1956

Brotherhood

. . . THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That we the delegates to the 131st Annual Meeting of the American Unitarian Association favor every attempt to meet and search for areas of agreement and mutual understanding among men of all races and persuasions and will ourselves foster and join with all such attempts;

2. That we respectfully urge the President of the United States, the governors of the separate states, and all persons in civil authority to call and persistently support, within their respective jurisdictions, conferences of good citizens of all races in order that a groundwork of healthy communication may be established and just solutions to these problems may be found;

3. That we urge upon all governmental officials and agencies their duty to accord the full protection of the law to all citizens in the exercise of their rights, including the right to vote, and the other rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States; and

4. Finally, that we call upon the Congress of the United States to enact such legislation as may be necessary to accord this protection wherever it is not provided by the local community.

May 28, 1957

Housing Discrimination

WHEREAS; Housing discrimination against Negroes and other minorities remains a prime source of injustice in many sections of the United States and Canada; and

WHEREAS; Discrimination against ownership and rental by Negroes and other minorities is often sustained by owners, landlords, neighbors, realtors, mortgage lenders, and developers, . . .

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the American Unitarian Association urge all people of good will to work unremittingly in all phases of local, state, and national life towards:

1. Abolishing all official sanctions and practices which would require racial segregation in public schools, public transportation, public housing, and other publicly supported facilities;
2. Eliminating racial restrictions on membership in churches, professional organizations, labor unions, and similar semi-public bodies;
3. Eliminating racial discrimination in employment and housing;
4. Promoting mutual understanding between members of different races by all available means, including working together in organizations having members of different races;
5. Encouraging the spread of information about successful action to end or lessen racial discrimination and promote racial understanding.

BAPTIST BODIES

AMERICAN BAPTIST CONVENTION

June 22, 1956

We recognize that during the past ten years great strides have been made in race relations in America and that it was a logical next step for the Supreme Court to declare two years ago that our public schools must be integrated to assure equality of educational opportunity.

We fully support the Supreme Court decision and deplore the resistance to this decision in certain states where integration of public education has met organized opposition.

Our Convention has spoken out against segregation and has repeatedly urged church leaders to work as unceasingly for a nonsegregated church as for an integrated society.

We rejoice that integration is progressing in the churches of our American Baptist Convention. Recent staff and missionary appointments testify to our intent as a religious fellowship to see that there is no racial "wall of separation" in our common service in the Kingdom. At the same time, we confess the urgency of accelerating this trend, which still is marked by futile effort, insincerity, and unwillingness to change.

Since the probability of developing integrated church congregations is contingent on the spread of open housing, we acknowledge our responsibility to work for conditions in our communities which will assure to persons the right to rent or own a home anywhere in the community solely

on the basis of personal preference and financial ability rather than on the basis of race, creed, or color.

Thus, in prayer and in penitence for our own failures, we pledge ourselves to work at all levels for justice, equality, and brotherhood among the races of America.

May 31, 1957

. . . we dedicate ourselves to the following objectives:

1. That membership in each Baptist church shall be open to all people of its community regardless of their race or national origin.

2. That each church shall choose its minister on the basis of character and ability without regard to racial background.

3. That each church shall work to assure equality for all people in education, employment, housing, and political activity.

4. That members of our churches shall base their fellowship with others on individual merit without regard to racial origins.

5. That we shall not align ourselves with any organized group or movement that works to retain segregation whether in country clubs, sororities, fraternities, service clubs, organizations of property owners, the Ku Klux Klan, White Citizens Councils, and all exclusive groups that deny membership to others on the basis of race.

6. That each Baptist organization, school, home, and hospital shall follow practices that are consistent with clear policies of racial non-discrimination. . . .

NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION U. S. A., INC.

Almost any American tourist of Europe and other eastern countries meets with the question of the attitude of America toward the intermingling of the races composing the population of the United States.

Some of these peoples are quite "scathing" in their remarks concerning the American claim of Democracy and Christianity on the one hand and the treatment America permits to be accorded her minority peoples on the other.

For many years Negroes have been puzzled as to the attitude they should adopt regarding the sincerity of the American claim of the policy of "JUSTICE TO ALL AND SPECIAL PRIVILEGE TO NONE."

When, however, the Supreme Court issued her memorable decision outlawing segregation in the public schools, the race took heart and reorganized her thinking with regards to America being in truth "The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave."

Negroes love America and entertain no bitterness toward her despite the vicious wrongs some commit against them in certain sections of the country. They have too long agonized in prayer for her security. They have given too freely of their blood to vouchsafe her institutions — not to love her with undying devotion. They believe the Supreme Court on May 17, 1954 justified the faith, the hope and the love they exercise toward this country.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN Annual Conference June 12-17, 1956

We reaffirm our belief that discrimination owing to color is out of keeping both with the teachings of the New Testament and with the stated position of the Church of the Brethren. We realize that, as we attempt to sharpen our efforts to practice genuine brotherhood, we are dealing with an issue that is not sectional in nature, and therefore, we speak firmly and in love to all Brethren who have been less than Christian in this matter, in every area of our land. We commend governmental agencies, our own churches and those of other denominations who have declared their intention to support the Supreme Court decision. We would repeat that our goal must be no less than an integrated church and public school in an integrated community. Such a goal involves housing, equal access to medical care, jobs in industry, the right to vote, and mem-

bership and participation in the affairs of the community and of the Christian body. We commend those in areas where racial tension is acute, and in other areas, who are pursuing these goals in a nonviolent way and pledge to them our continuing support. We appeal to all Brethren to give leadership now, with courage, so that we may move toward this goal with calmness, sympathy, and seasoned judgment, realizing that He who made of "one blood, all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth," shows no partiality among the races.

Annual Conference

1957

In spite of racial tensions that have developed in many areas we are grateful for the steady progress toward integration in many communities and in an increasing number of churches. We believe that the teaching of Scripture is clear. God has no favorite race or nation; in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. We renew our pledges, made in past Conferences, to work for an integrated church in an integrated community. Toward this end we urge every church (1) to develop an education and action program aimed at bringing about interracial understanding, (2) to open its membership to all Christians regardless of their race or national origin, (3) to support orderly and peaceful means of eliminating discrimination in education, employment, housing, medical care, and voting privileges, (4) to oppose every organized effort to deny equal opportunity to any minority group, and (5) to maintain such cordial relations with all groups that the church may display both a reconciling and a redemptive spirit wherever tensions exist.

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST International Convention October 11-16, 1957

Resolution No. H-43

Churches . . . are now faced with the fact that their responsibility is one of moving from principle to practice within their own local situations. The following concrete suggestions as to procedure represent the direction in which our brotherhood should move:

Local churches should make unmistakably clear the witness of their individual congregations as to the inclusive nature of their fellowships.

For some this may mean the employment of a multi-racial staff; for others it may mean an active evangelism program among persons of "other" races; for still others it may mean public announcement from pulpit or in advertising, "We welcome all people," and for still others it may mean long study and painful experimentation as they seek to fulfill the teachings of Christ under the leading of the Holy Spirit. . . .

Local congregations should cooperate with one another in making surveys of their local communities regarding discrimination in housing and the use of public facilities.

Resolution No. H-44

WHEREAS we are witnessing in our time the disintegration of colonialism all over the world and the unprecedented struggle of people and nations for liberty, equality, justice and dignity;

WHEREAS the denial of any of these unalienable rights of men and nations is a denial of the Christian Gospel in that it strikes at the nature of God, and, thus, the nature of man; . . .

WHEREAS the declared position of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has been in accord with the position of the World Council of Churches and of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States — which declared a non-segregated Church in a non-segregated Society is the Christian Ideal;

WHEREAS many of the churches, confronted with a population change in racial or ethnic character in their areas, are following the special pattern of selling out and relocating rather than become an all-inclusive fellowship; . . .

WHEREAS other churches, confronted with the same challenge, are endeavoring to let the church be the Church

— letting it be known that their church is open to any and all people, regardless of race or ethnic origin, who espouse the doctrines of New Testament Christianity as proclaimed by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ); . . .

BE IT RESOLVED:

First — that we urge and encourage all ministers and churches of our communion to be willing to bear any cross of persecution or reprisal brought upon them by their fearless witness to the rights of all people, regardless of race or ethnic origin, to liberty, equality, justice and human dignity, and to the true nature of the Church and the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ without fear or favor:

Second — that we urge and encourage agencies, congregations and members of our brotherhood to support all Christians who are under persecution for conscience sake.

Third — that because of the emergency nature of many situations where churches are in areas of racial change, we urge that those responsible in our brotherhood organizational life give attention to allocating funds to this critical need.

Fourth — that we discourage our churches in areas of racial change and transition from selling out and relocating where the move has been based on the change in the racial or ethnic character of the population, and encourage our churches to remain on the field and bear fearless witness to the true nature of the church.

Fifth — that we, as a brotherhood, provide a counselling service and, if needed, financial support to churches confronted with a population change in racial or ethnic character, in order to help the church remain on the field and weather the transition period.

EVANGELICAL UNITED BRETHREN General Conference December 8-9, 1955

. . . we set forth the following pronouncement with respect to four areas of our common life.

1. Church Life

Believing it to be God's will and His way of life, we urge our local Evangelical United Brethren churches to develop a fellowship which is racially and ethnically inclusive. To this end we strongly advise our local churches to meet the opportunities of ministry to their communities regardless of races and/or nationalities.

2. Employment

We believe that discrimination in employment based on race is un-Christian. Therefore we urge all Evangelical United Brethren General Departments and Institutions as well as each local church to take immediate steps to end any such discriminatory practices now obtaining and to enlist all concerned to refrain from any such policies in the future. We urge our laymen in positions of leadership in employment circles to practice nondiscrimination.

3. Education

Believing in the democracy and Christian fairness of desegregation in the public school, and recognizing the vital relationship between such democracy and the future welfare of our nation, we urge our Evangelical United Brethren people to participate in and encourage the development of school integration in their communities.

4. Housing

Families should be free to choose where they shall live without discrimination because of race. We reject any policy to the contrary and appeal to our members to bring their own practices in line with this idea. We urge our members in the vocation of real estate and home financing to adopt Christian principles of non-discrimination. We furthermore urge our local churches to help counteract panic tactics of community change by encouraging their members to consider carefully every aspect of a contemplated move to a new community.

General Conference October 9-17, 1958

. . . We suggest that we take the following specific actions to better human relationships between the races:

1. Promote a Christian ministry in our communities without regard to race. This means welcoming all races in all phases of Church life.

2. Appoint ministers of other races as well as white ministers in our churches that are multi-racial in character, as has been done in several of our churches.

3. Welcome people of all races when they move into any section of our community. Let us not listen to those who, for the desire of personal gain, encourage panic when Negroes or other minority groups purchase real estate in previously all-white communities.

4. Give active and consistent support to the Supreme Court decisions on desegregation and resist all attempts to circumvent them. We uphold the civil liberties of all American citizens irrespective of color.

5. Withhold permission to use our church buildings as segregated schools in an effort to disobey the mandate of the Supreme Court. We commend the Virginia Conference for the strong position they have taken on this matter.

PHILADELPHIA YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS August 31 - September 3, 1956

We the 120 Friends gathered here at Wilmington from 16 Yearly Meetings, as well as other Friends groups, greet you all in Christian love.

Coming from North, South, East, and West, we have been made tender in the deeper realization that "all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God" in our relations with our brothers. We have stood in the light of Christ "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and which makes all men equal in God's sight.

We have been led to face our failure to meet the urgent challenge of the worldwide revolution in human relations. We recognize our confusion and our lack of faithfulness to our principles. In all parts of the nation we have failed. Through ignorance or complacency or fear we have neglected our moral obligation. We have not treated all men as brothers.

Group statements sometimes mean very little, but this we know: that right relations with God must lead to right relations with all men. Instead of passing judgment on one another, our task lies in helping one another to move forward in a practical application of this truth. Here, at this Conference, Friends, pastoral and nonpastoral, urban and rural, Negro and white, have prayed together and spoken to one another honestly in a spirit of love. We have gained insight into one another's problems and have seen barriers fall. We urge Friends to create opportunities for similar experiences.

We see a service for Friends in the quiet, experimental action taken by the individual Meeting and the individual Friend in their home communities. We earnestly pray that we can move under a sense of the urgency of world events from where we are to where God would have us be in race relations. More important than where we are is the direction in which we are going.

In the midst of tension and conflict at home and abroad, we see the immediacy of this problem. . . .

LUTHERAN BODIES AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH Biennial Convention 1954

Segregation and social stratification, both based on essentially external differences, regrettably occur in Christian churches. . . . The presence of segregation and stratification in the churches undermines the power inhering in the Gospel of uniting men through Christ in fellowship with the Father. . . .

Were His Spirit truly to rule in men's hearts and lives, problems of race segregation and social stratification would disappear. The free and voluntary actions of men who love neighbor as self because of God's love for them will exceed in justice and equity the compulsion forced by decree upon the unwilling.

It is incumbent upon Christians, their churches, and their church agencies, so far as it lies within their power, to practice to the full the realistic insights of their faith in dealing with issues of race and class. Pride and smug assumptions of superiority or privileged position draw the Master's censure today as they did for the sons of Zebedee.

It is the unique task of the churches, shared by every Christian, to seek to bring the power of the Word of Sacraments to bear upon individuals, thereby changing their hearts and lives. This course alone promises the ultimate corrective for the evils of segregation and stratification.

AUGUSTANA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Synod, Moorhead, Minn.

June 11-17, 1956

... We urge our members to use their influence in the securing of full rights of citizenship for all, and in discouraging any activity in their communities which would seek to circumvent orderly judicial procedure in the implementation of the Supreme Court decisions of segregation.

We recognize that the evils of racial discrimination are not restricted to any one section of the nation, and we encourage our people to oppose all forms of racial discrimination whether they be found in the North or in the South.

We point out to our members, especially those in the northern states, that discrimination in housing, real estate transactions, and employment is just as much a violation of Christian principles as discrimination in places of public assembly, public transportation, or schools. . . .

Where there are members of local churches in which racial integration is taking place, or is likely to take place, who are unwilling to continue their membership in such congregations for this reason, we encourage such members to examine their consciences in the light of Holy Scriptures, and in the doctrines and decisions of the Church, specifically that God has created all men in His image, that Jesus Christ has given His life for the salvation of all men, that the Holy Spirit would call all men into the fellowship of the Church.

We remind congregations of their inescapable responsibility to bear witness in its locality to these truths, as well as the privilege of demonstrating that the Christian fellowship transcends barriers of race and class.

We urge pastors of congregations to which such disaffected members may be seeking letters of transfer to encourage them to remain in their own congregations and to demonstrate Christian acceptance of and love toward those whom they have deemed different from themselves. . . .

LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

June 20-29, 1956

... RESOLVED, That The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod affirm its adherence to, and application of, the Scriptural principles of fact concerning race relations and church work as adopted by its representatives in conjunction with representatives of the sister synods of the Synodical Conference, and as reported in the Proceedings of the Forty-Second Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America of August 12 to 15, 1952, . . .

And be it further . . .

RESOLVED, 1. That all congregations of Synod regard all persons regardless of race or ethnic origin living within the limits of their respective parishes, and not associated with another Christian church, as individuals whom God would reach with the Gospel of His saving grace through the ministry of the local congregation;

2. That congregations operating in changing communities be encouraged to continue operations in those areas rather than relinquish their properties through sale to other denominations, and that the various District Mission Boards

be encouraged to subsidize these congregations when this becomes necessary, so that the souls in those communities, regardless of race or ethnic grouping, may be won and served;

3. That synodical institutions, agencies, and offices continue to make no distinction, based upon race or color, in their entrance requirements or employment policies; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That since Christians are constrained to do justice and love mercy, we acknowledge our responsibility as a church to provide guidance for our members to work in the capacity of Christian citizens for the elimination of discrimination, wherever it may exist, in community, city, state, nation, and world.

UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Convention

October 17, 1956

... We believe that Christians have special responsibilities to keep open the channels of communication and understanding among the different groups in this controversy. Our congregations are encouraged to contribute to the solution of the problem by demonstrating in their own corporate lives the possibility of integration.

We furthermore state that due heed ought to be given the following principles by all and especially by those holding civil office, since they hold their power under God and are responsible to him for its exercise:

(1) The public school system so necessary to the maintenance of a democratic, free and just way of life, must be upheld and strengthened.

(2) All parties to the present controversy are in duty bound to follow and uphold due process of law, and to maintain public order.

October 6, 1958

Whereas, the ULCA is sensitive to the present challenges and opportunities in the realm of human relations and is conscious of its responsibilities to provide leadership in this realm;

Therefore, be it resolved: that the ULCA commend the Board of Social Missions for its creative program directed toward improvement of race relations in harmony with the principles expressed by the 1956 Convention of the Church in the Statement on Desegregation; and

Be it further resolved: that the Church extend to all its pastors and congregations the assurance of its continuing approval, support, and prayers in the Christian implementation of these principles.

METHODIST BODIES

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Council of Bishops

February 15-18, 1956

... "An integrated church in an integrated society" is the declared policy of American Protestantism. Virtually every major denomination in the United States has hailed the Supreme Court decision on the integration of schools as a milestone in the achievement of human rights. Likewise, the Roman Catholic Church has condemned racial discrimination as "unjust and un-Christian."

In this struggle for universal acceptance of an integrated society, the Negro church plays an increasingly vital role. We have witnessed instance after instance of sacrifice, toil and even bloodshed by ordained ministers of the Gospel determined to make a reality out of the professions of Democracy. . . .

Our people must know that all men are created equal, and that any divergence from this principle is hypocrisy, in fact, immoral. The people must likewise know that the law of the land is second only to the law of God and that to openly flout the dictates of the highest tribunal is flirting with tragedy. . . .

We believe it to be our Christian duty to awaken a social consciousness concerning these vital issues. This represents teaching the Gospel of Christ in a practical sense. Telling our Brethren how they can live and play in peace and harmony is a task of our ministry. . . .

As followers of Christ we are opposed to violence and mob action. This latter must not be confused with mass action, a technique we must learn to employ in certain fields against those who would exploit us. Who would sell their wares to us for profit must not at the same time oppose our march to freedom.

We commend therefore the citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, who in protest against injustice have refused to lend sustenance to their oppressors. The "Spirit of Montgomery" must be applied wherever possible against individuals, corporations, local and national, who fail to stand up and be counted. . .

May God grant us the strength and courage to fight on, never once turning backwards in our march. May the scourge of race hatred, segregation and unjust discriminations vanish forever from the face of the earth.

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL ZION CHURCH

Board of Christian Education — School and College
August, 1954

. . . WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States has recently, May 17, 1954, declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional and has ordered the desegregation of all public schools in the United States;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Christian Education — School and College, assembled at the Quadrennial General Convention on Christian Education and the General Assembly and National Council of Christian Youth of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church shall go on record as:

1. Thanking God for the Supreme Court decision and reaffirming our confidence in the inevitable fulfillment of our American Democracy under the Constitution.
2. Recommending to our far-flung constituency of more than 723,000 people at 44 Annual Conferences in Continental United States active cooperation with local school boards in implementing the program of immediate desegregation and urging our pastors, presiding elders and people to contribute to the morale-building principles employed to create the climate of public opinion favorable to desegregation in every form of American life.
3. Authorizing, empowering and urging our Secondary Schools and Junior Colleges to amend their charters and/or their rules and regulations, if necessary, so as to provide for integrated faculties and student bodies.

CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Third Episcopal District
1955

The unanimous decision of the Supreme Court of the United States that racial segregation in public education in our country violates the 14th Amendment to the Constitution marked a new historic milestone in the progress of our nation towards the goal of full and true democracy. . . .

. . . it is encouraging to observe the commendable calm and poise with which the vast majority of the people, both colored and white, of the states affected by the Court's decision are addressing themselves to the consideration of its implications.

This is the Christian way. This is the American way. This is a nation of law respecting, law abiding citizens. It is to be expected that all of us who are concerned with the issue of the Court's declaration shall possess our souls in all Christian sobriety, dignity, fortitude, patience, and tolerance as, under God's guidance, we seek to discover the most practical formulas for the achievement of nationwide conformity to the decision.

The eyes of the nations of the world are upon us today. We must not forfeit, nor dare we further endanger, our moral leadership of the free world at this critical moment in history.

Annual Conference
1958

. . . Under Divine Compulsion we therefore urge:
That we lend all our forces to a forthright all-out effort

for integration in all public, private and denominational schools on all levels, . . .

That every attempt be made to arouse the conscience of America to her responsibility of practicing at home the democracy she preaches abroad, of making possible and guaranteeing to all minority groups at home the freedom she offers the oppressed peoples of other lands, of assuring those victims of prejudices, discrimination and oppression within her own borders the same opportunities she affords the refugees from the lands of the Iron Curtain.

That we deplore and publicize (1) our disappointment in the failure of our Federal government to pass the Civil Rights Bill as first drafted and (2) the open defiance of the Supreme Court decree by certain Southern Dixiecrats; [we] praise, support politically and emulate those men and women, regardless of race, here in these United States who have not merely risked political careers but have undertaken hazards to their own personal safety in their courageous and dauntless opposition to the oppression of minority groups. . . .

That the Committee on un-American Activities of the Congress of the United States to institute an immediate investigation of the White Citizens Councils, KKK and other subversive organizations designed to harass, intimidate and terrorize any citizen or group of citizens.

That all Americans be reminded, and recognize that technological genius and material plenty are not so important as the basic quality and dignity of man, the acceptance of which characterizes the attitude toward concern for and dealing with every other individual.

THE METHODIST CHURCH

Board of Social and Economic Relations
January 14, 1955

. . . We recommend to our Methodist people, clergy and laity alike:

That the decision of the Supreme Court be accepted graciously and gracefully with the realization that this decision is but a conformation of our own Church's position.

. . . That we actively support and continually strive to preserve and improve our public schools to the end that every child shall be afforded the best possible means which public education can provide to prepare him for responsible citizenship in a democratic community. We look to our people to help superintendents and boards of education who face the task of implementing the decision of the Court.

That we create right attitudes in our homes and in our church schools as we work with children and youth so they may learn to live in harmony with those of other races.

That we practice and preach our belief that we are all children of the same Heavenly Father, that we all live under the same law, and worship the same God. Therefore, we encourage our churches everywhere to move resolutely forward toward the goal of full participation of the people of all races in the life of the Church and the community.

General Conference

1956

The position of The Methodist Church, long held and frequently declared, is an amplification of our Lord's teaching. "To discriminate against a person solely upon the basis of his race is both unfair and un-Christian. Every child of God is entitled to that place in society which he has won by his industry and his character. To deny that position of honor because of the accident of his birth is neither honest democracy nor good religion." (The Episcopal Address, 1952 and 1956.)

There must be no place in The Methodist Church for racial discrimination or enforced segregation. Recognizing that we have not attained this goal, yet rejoicing in the progress made, we recommend that discrimination or segregation by any method of practice whether by conference structure or otherwise in The Methodist Church be abolished with reasonable speed. The growing spirit of

brotherhood throughout the church strengthens our confidence that, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we will continue to go forward. . . .

The decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States relative to segregation make necessary far-reaching and often difficult community readjustments throughout the nation. We call upon our people to effect these adjustments in all good faith, with brotherliness and patience.

. . . In this spirit, we recommend the following:

1. That the institutions of the church, local churches, universities, theological schools, publishing agencies, hospitals, and homes carefully restudy their policies and practices as they relate to race, making certain that these policies and practices are Christian.

2. That Methodists in their homes, in their work, in their churches and in their communities actively work to eliminate discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin. That parents, teachers and others who work with children and youth help create attitudes which make it easy to live in harmony with those of other races.

3. That Methodist churches in changing neighborhoods, rather than seeking new locations, early prepare their people to welcome into their fellowship all races as they become a part of their community.

That our pastors, upon whom rests the responsibility of receiving individuals into church membership, discharge that responsibility without regard to race, color, or national origin.

4. That bishops, district superintendents, pastors, and lay leaders seek ways for the implementation of better fraternal relations between the Central Jurisdiction and other jurisdictions where they are adjacent by closer cooperation at annual and district conferences and at local church levels.

5. That Methodists at national and international meetings of the church make provision for equality of accommodations for all races without discrimination or segregation.

6. That the many racial and national groups which make up our Methodist world fellowship be afforded the opportunity without discrimination to enjoy full participation in all the activities of the church.

Woman's Division of Christian Service

September 23, 1958

. . . The Woman's Division of Christian Service of The Methodist Church records its gratification for the ruling of the Supreme Court of the United States on September 12, 1958. This ruling unanimously affirmed a lower court decision on school integration in Little Rock which said:

"The time has not yet come in these United States when an order of a Federal Court must be whittled away, watered down, or shamefully withdrawn in the face of violent and unlawful acts. . . ." . . .

The Woman's Division calls upon Methodist women everywhere to pray for God's guidance and the strength to stand firm in these trying times. *It is recommended* that Methodist women join with other like-minded groups in their community and nation seeking together and as individual Christians to work for:

1. Enforcement of the Supreme Court Decision for Integration in Public Schools.

2. Open occupancy housing policies in their communities.

3. Fair employment policies and practices in all phases of the community life.

4. "A fellowship without barriers" in their local churches.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, U. S.

General Assembly, 1957

Freedom of Worship

. . . Within the bounds of our Assembly there seems to exist a striking example of the violation of the right to worship. Members of the Koinonia Community near Americus, Georgia, state that their communal life is not primarily a social or agricultural experiment but an experience in

worship. They have professed their allegiance to this nation, they have denied affiliation in any subversive party, they have violated no laws and have made a significant contribution to farming techniques in this area. Yet because their experiment knows no barrier of color they are treated as enemies of society. . . . The General Assembly would remind the citizens of this area of the danger of trying to destroy those who dare to live by their Christian convictions, even though they may differ from them in their opinions. The General Assembly commands all Christian individuals and groups in Georgia who have spoken out so strongly against this denial of freedom of worship. Other examples might be given from other areas of attempts to destroy freedom of worship as a basic right of all Americans. The Assembly calls on Christians everywhere to be alert to this grievous threat to freedom of religion.

Freedom to Learn

It is in the Protestant tradition to support the public school system for a free public education as the handmaiden of democracy. Ignorance and prejudice are the weapons of tyranny. . . . Therefore, the General Assembly urges its members to make every effort to maintain an adequate public school system for all elements of its population and to provide proper compensation for its teachers. . . . The General Assembly would call attention to the fact that the Christian faith has never countenanced racial discrimination and that the supreme law of the land requires that it no longer be practiced in the public school system. Therefore, during this period of transition every member of the Assembly is urged to work in his own community for an honest and durable adjustment.

Freedom of Speech

The Christian Church advocates the right of free speech even if the idea expressed be wrong. Freedom of speech involves the right of dissent; yet of late America has been compelled to struggle for this right both within and without her own borders. . . .

Freedom of speech includes the right to register one's opinion through the medium of voting. While it is deplorable that so many of our citizens fail to exercise their franchise, there are many others who are denied the privilege by devious means, . . . The price of this corporate dishonesty is political demagogery in its worst form.

Freedom of Assembly

In many parts of the world people have not the privilege of public assembly except as it is sponsored or sanctioned by the State. This condition is to be deplored and feared. Yet in the United States there are areas in which freedom of assembly is seriously restricted. Where there are groups which would meet on a non-segregated basis, the State sometimes stands in the way. Efforts to maintain the status quo in social patterns and to intimidate those who believe in the right of public assembly to discuss mutual social problems have been made by numerous "citizens" groups formed in many states. To strive to carry out the law of the land and to advocate the same is to incur the enmity of these groups. Perhaps it is in the areas of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly that Christian citizens should give primary attention at this time, for people with full freedom to voice their convictions cannot remain fettered. . . .

General Assembly, 1958

. . . As the Christian people of the South face [the] problems of race which now present us with an unparalleled obligation and opportunity, the General Assembly proposed for careful consideration the following principles which in its judgment should guide them:

All people have been created in the image of God and are to be treated as such. Therefore, we should confront problems of race against the background of a world perspective. . . .

To do unto others as we would have them do unto us, we must seek sympathetically and imaginatively to understand their point of view, their needs, aspirations, and fears;

this is a rule for individuals, groups, and nations.

The Christian conscience cannot rest content with any legal or compulsive arrangement that brands any people as inferior; which denies them the full right of citizenship on the ground of race, color, or social status; or which prevents them from developing to the fullest possible extent the potentialities with which they, as individuals, have been endowed by the Creator.

The recent decision of the Supreme Court regarding segregation in the Public Schools must be recognized as the law of the land, and obeyed as such unless it is changed by legal and constitutional methods.

The public school system must be preserved and strengthened. To withhold the benefits of a public school education from any child, to prevent any community by punitive means from carrying out its educational responsibility is an unwise and dangerous expedient.

Violence, and furious or unrestrained language which may incite thereto, must be avoided; all organizations, hooded or otherwise, which seek to take the law in their own hand, and all movements which would prevent citizens from resorting to law in their own defense must be opposed.

The right to vote must be made secure for citizens without restrictions based on race or color, without preventive stratagems which make a mockery of democratic processes.

Communication between responsible leaders of the two races in the South must be developed, strengthened, and maintained. It is essential that individual church members seek to be led by the Spirit of Christ in their daily contacts with those of other races, and so preserve the fellowship of believers in Him as Lord and Savior.

To the Christian people of the South there is now given an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Gospel in solving a difficult problem in human relations whose far-reaching effects are incalculable. God grant that we may not fail our nation or our Lord in this period of crisis.

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

General Convention
1955

. . . Resolved, That the 58th General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, now commends to all the clergy and people of this Church that they accept and support this ruling of the Supreme Court [re segregation in the public schools] and, that by opening channels of Christian conference and communication between the races concerned in each diocese and community, they anticipate constructively the local implementation of this ruling as the law of the land; and be it further

Resolved, That we make our own the statement of the Anglican Congress that "in the work of the Church we should welcome people of any race at any service conducted by a priest or layman of any ethnic origin, and bring them into the full fellowship of the congregation and its organizations."

General Convention
1958

Freedom from Racial Discrimination

Whereas, We believe in the natural dignity and value of every man, of whatever color or race, as created in the image of God and as one for whom Christ died; that discrimination by reason of color or race between men has as its root human sin; that the Church must confess its own sin in this area; and

Whereas, We acknowledge that there are no easy answers to the problems created by the effort to apply these convictions to special and local situations, particularly in times of cultural and social change, and that the composite thoughts of churchmen in conference or convention may or may not be the will of God because we all stand under the judgment of God and not finally under the judgments of

failable men; and also that, despite honest differences of opinion, we are bound together, through our union in Christ and His fellowship of love, to seek God's will; therefore be it

Resolved, That we call first upon our fellow Churchmen by God's grace to cleanse themselves of all spirit of racial discrimination; and then upon all persons, especially the members of our Church, to work together; in charity and forbearance, towards the establishment, without racial discrimination, of full opportunities in fields such as education, housing, employment and public accommodations.

Federal and Supreme Court Orders

Whereas, The Church has generally taught as part of the Christian Ethic, the obligation of Christians to obey the Civil Law under which they live; and

Whereas, It has generally been clear that the right of the civil disobedience and of revolution should be undertaken by Christians only for the gravest reasons of conscience and as a last resort; and

Whereas, The Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of this land; and

Whereas, The Supreme Court is the ultimate interpreter of the Constitution; and

Whereas, Those who are in disagreement with Federal and Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution have the legal recourse of amendment of the Constitution; therefore be it

Resolved, That this Church call upon its members to face seriously their obligation to conform to Federal and Supreme Court Orders in regard to giving to all students equal access to our public schools.

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

June 7, 1957

Credo on Race Relations

We believe that the problem of race is a problem of human relations. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments provide the final authority for all matters of human relations. We believe that all problems of human existence are resolved in the love for God above all, and for our neighbor as ourselves. We further believe that such love has been fully revealed to us in the life and work of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior; and that the grace to participate in that love is readily available through the Holy Spirit by faith. We believe that the primary function of the Church of Jesus Christ is to witness to that love to all people in every walk of life.

We believe that in the light of the Biblical revelation, we have fallen short in the demonstration of that love. We hereby make an act of confession and repentance. . . .

We believe that sincere repentance manifests itself in acts of obedient love. We therefore believe that our sincerity will be demonstrated through concrete local acts, such as:

. . . conscientious efforts to open the doors of all churches to all people.

the support of those laws and agencies designed to uphold and guarantee the rights and health of all. . . .

the education of our youth in the privileges and responsibilities of life in a free, mixed society.

We believe that Christian love represents the highest criterion for all human relations. . . . We believe also, that in a responsible society, the immediate goals of such love will be structured into laws. We believe that the Church exercises its prophetic role when it inspires its constituent society to construct such laws, and when it subjects such laws to the scrutiny of Divine revelation. In that spirit, we believe that the recent Supreme Court decision on the ordered, gradual desegregation of the public schools of our land, represents an effective legal expression of Christian attitudes and convictions at the present time. We believe that we should support and implement the intent of that decision. . . .

We believe that marriage is a Divinely appointed institution to perpetuate the human race, to preserve the order of society, and to realize the fullness of human personality.

We believe therefore that when two people are so joined, regardless of race differences, society and church must respect that marriage.

We further believe that the Church recognizes the sanctity of marriage, and bestows God's blessings on those who marry "in the Lord". We believe that being "in Christ" transcends all ethnic and cultural barriers. We believe that the Church misconceives its function when it actively hinders, forestalls, or denies, the marriage of any two people who, loving Christ, love each other. We also believe on the other hand, that the Church has received no Divine mandate to actively foster interracial marriage. We believe that when two people present themselves before God and the Church for marriage within the Scriptural context, the Church unites them with the blessing and under the aegis of God, and welcomes them as a family into the full Christian fellowship. We further strongly believe that when children born into this creative relationship receive the stings and outrages of a sub-Christian society, the Christian fellowship as the Body of Christ acting in compassion and mercy, binds up the wounds and heals the hurts of its injured members. We also believe that, at the same time the Church must bring the righteousness of Christ to bear on a society wayward in its offense of "these little ones". We believe that by so bearing one another's burdens, the burdens of offended and offender, we fulfill the law of Christ. . . .

We believe that the racially inclusive and culturally integrated church represents the highest demonstration of the transforming fellowship of reconciliation which characterizes the Christian fellowship at its best. We believe that where opportunities for such churches exist, conscientious efforts be made to realize this ideal. We further believe that those who are ministering in these frontier areas of Christian faith and life be actively encouraged and warmly supported.

We believe that racially restricted housing covenants, real or implied, are inconsistent with Christian integrity. We believe that according to Scripture, the rights of property are subservient to the needs of people. We believe that there is nothing inherent in race differences to necessitate the decline in property values. We believe that restrictive pressures and flight-in-panic on the part of dominant groups lead to unnecessary real estate declines and contribute to the establishment and perpetuation of ghetto-existence. . . .

We believe that each generation inherits from the past problems for which it cannot be held directly accountable, but for whose solutions it is held responsible. We believe that race relations is such a problem. We believe that the Cross of Christ, seen as vicarious atonement, points the way to the Christian resolution of this dilemma. We believe that we are called to bear the wounds (or crosses) of vicarious

suffering, so that the least of Christ's brethren may find their rightful places in the society of men and the Kingdom of God.

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES General Council, 1956

. . . We call upon the boards, conferences and conventions, seminaries, colleges, institutional homes, and local congregations of our fellowship to follow practices consistent with clear policies of non-discrimination. . . .

We commend the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other organizations that have employed the judicial processes provided under our Constitution to define and enlarge the scope of human rights for all our citizens.

We further commend the spirit in which the pastors and church members in Montgomery, Alabama, are struggling for non-discriminatory treatment in the buses of that city.

It is our firm conviction that the Constitutional rights of all persons to engage in free and open discussion of all the issues in race relations must be assured, along with the right to vote and to join organizations of their own choice, without becoming the objects of economic reprisals, threats or acts of violence.

We recognize that the problems of racial integration confront our people in all sections of the country. Residential segregation makes integration difficult in neighborhoods, schools, churches, and other associations even where individuals are willing to accept persons on their merits. Patterns of restriction based on race are maintained in the housing market. Attempts are often made to justify these restrictions on the basis that neighborhood integration depresses economic values. We call attention to authoritative studies indicating that property values in mixed neighborhoods stabilize at the same level as those prevailing in comparable all-white neighborhoods.

We pledge ourselves to support non-segregated practices in selling, buying, and leasing property, and we call upon our fellow Congregational Christians to do likewise. We urge real estate dealers, builders, mortgagors, and government housing agents to follow non-discriminatory practices in their businesses. We urge churches in localities where the racial composition of the population is changing to extend their ministries to all the people in the area and to welcome them into membership. We urge conferences, conventions, and boards to encourage such churches with counsel and financial resources. . . .

Unless so stated, it is not to be construed as reflecting the attitudes or positions of the Department of Racial and Cultural Relations or of The National Council of Churches.

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BROTHERS IN CHRIST



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